



Department of  
Toxic Substances  
Control

*Preventing  
environmental  
damage from  
hazardous waste,  
and restoring  
contaminated  
sites for all  
Californians.*



State of California



California  
Environmental  
Protection Agency

Fact Sheet, May 2006

## Proposed Oxnard School Site Protection Plan for Methane Gas

Located west of the intersection of Vineyard Avenue and Walnut Drive

You are invited to review and comment on a plan to prevent methane gas buildup and collection in and under buildings at the proposed **Riverpark-Legacy Development Intermediate School** site. Environmental investigations have identified methane at this proposed school site. High concentrations of methane in a confined space could cause a fire or explosion or potential suffocation.

The Draft Removal Action Workplan (RAW) outlines alternatives to reduce methane buildup. The recommended remedy requires installation of a Passive Venting and Barrier System, to safely release methane gas to the outside air. The proposed remedy will provide a safer environment for building a new intermediate school providing 23 classrooms for 607 students.

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), which is part of the California Environmental Protection Agency, oversees the investigation of school properties to identify the presence of hazardous materials. Our goal is to safeguard the public health and protect the environment.

### Public Comment Period May 12, 2006 to June 13, 2006

A public comment period will be held to comment on the draft RAW for the proposed Riverpark-Legacy Development Intermediate School site. We invite you to submit your comments/concerns during this time. DTSC will consider comments received before the RAW is approved for implementation.

### Public Meeting

DTSC will hold a public meeting to explain this project, and answer questions and receive public comments.

**Date:** May 24, 2006

**Time:** 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** Rio School District (Board Room)  
3300 Cortez Street  
Oxnard, CA 93036

**The Draft RAW and other related project documents are available  
at the local information repositories listed on page 4 of this fact sheet.**



## Site History & Background

The 19.5 acre site includes two parcels; a 1.4 acre parcel added to the existing Rio Del Mar Elementary School, and an 18.1 acre parcel for a planned intermediate school. In the past, the site has been used for agricultural activities. Development began in 2004 for a larger 701-acre parcel for commercial and residential development. One abandoned oil well is located on-site and several abandoned oil wells are located near the site.

## Investigation Findings

The Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the school site was prepared in March 2005, and became final in May 2005. The site was investigated for:

- ◆ Organochlorine pesticides
- ◆ Metals (Lead, Arsenic, etc.)
- ◆ Total petroleum hydrocarbons
- ◆ Volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- ◆ Gases (methane and hydrogen sulfide)

The PEA included a health risk assessment and no chemicals were found to present a significant health risk. Methane, a safety risk, was the only chemical of concern found. This methane is most likely from organic material in the imported fill soil that was used to grade the site and/or the underlying native soil. Additional site investigations confirmed the location and amount of the methane in the soil.

DTSC has given the School District approval to move forward with construction in two areas: the 1.4 acre parcel that was added to the elementary school and a 14.75 acre portion of the intermediate school (east and southwest area of the property). Installation of the venting system will take place as part of the school construction.

The additional investigations show that methane concentrations on the remaining 3.35 acres are decreasing. However, as of the end of February 2006, the concentrations remain above DTSC acceptable level and will require a RAW. DTSC will continue monitoring methane levels prior to the actual installation.

## Understanding Methane

Methane occurs as natural gas in coal mines, oil and gas fields. It can also result from the decomposition or breakdown of organic material in landfills, sewers, dairies, etc. Methane gas is colorless, odorless and flammable and may enter the building through cracks in the floor and accumulate in enclosed spaces. Exposure to methane gas does not pose a direct health risk and does not cause cancer. Methane displaces oxygen and could cause suffocation. At concentrations between 50,000 and 150,000 parts per million, it could potentially cause a fire or explosion. DTSC requires school properties with methane levels over 5000 be evaluated for a protective action. Due to the explosive potential, methane is considered a hazardous material under California Education Code Section 172010.1.

## Summary of Cleanup Plan

In the Draft RAW, prepared in August 2005, each proposed removal alternative was screened and evaluated based on effectiveness, implementation, and cost.

The passive venting system was recommended as the removal alternative:

- ◆ The Passive Venting with Barrier system is designed to safely release the methane gas to the outside air or atmosphere and prevent gas buildup in the soil beneath and within two of the four planned buildings.
- ◆ The ventilation and barriers will remove the physical dangers, if any, from the movement and buildup of methane gas.
- ◆ The barrier system consists of high-density latex under the two buildings, which methane can not pass through.
- ◆ The passive venting system is collection pipe placed in sand or gravel under the barriers that connects to vertical solid piping. This will allow methane gas to gather in the collection system and flow up through the vent risers to the outside air.

- ♦ Inspection and supervision of the installation will be done by DTSC. In addition, the barrier will be pressure-tested and smoke tested to make certain there are no leaks.

A licensed engineer experienced in methane will certify the construction and an Operation and Maintenance Plan will call for regular inspections to confirm the mitigation system is working properly.

### California Environmental Quality Act

DTSC is required to review all environmental activities under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which asks a series of questions about the possibility of significant effect on the environment.

DTSC has prepared a draft Notice of Exemption for this project as required by the (CEQA). This project is considered exempt since DTSC has found no evidence that the installation of a Passive Venting with Barrier system will have a significant negative effect on the environment.

### Next Steps

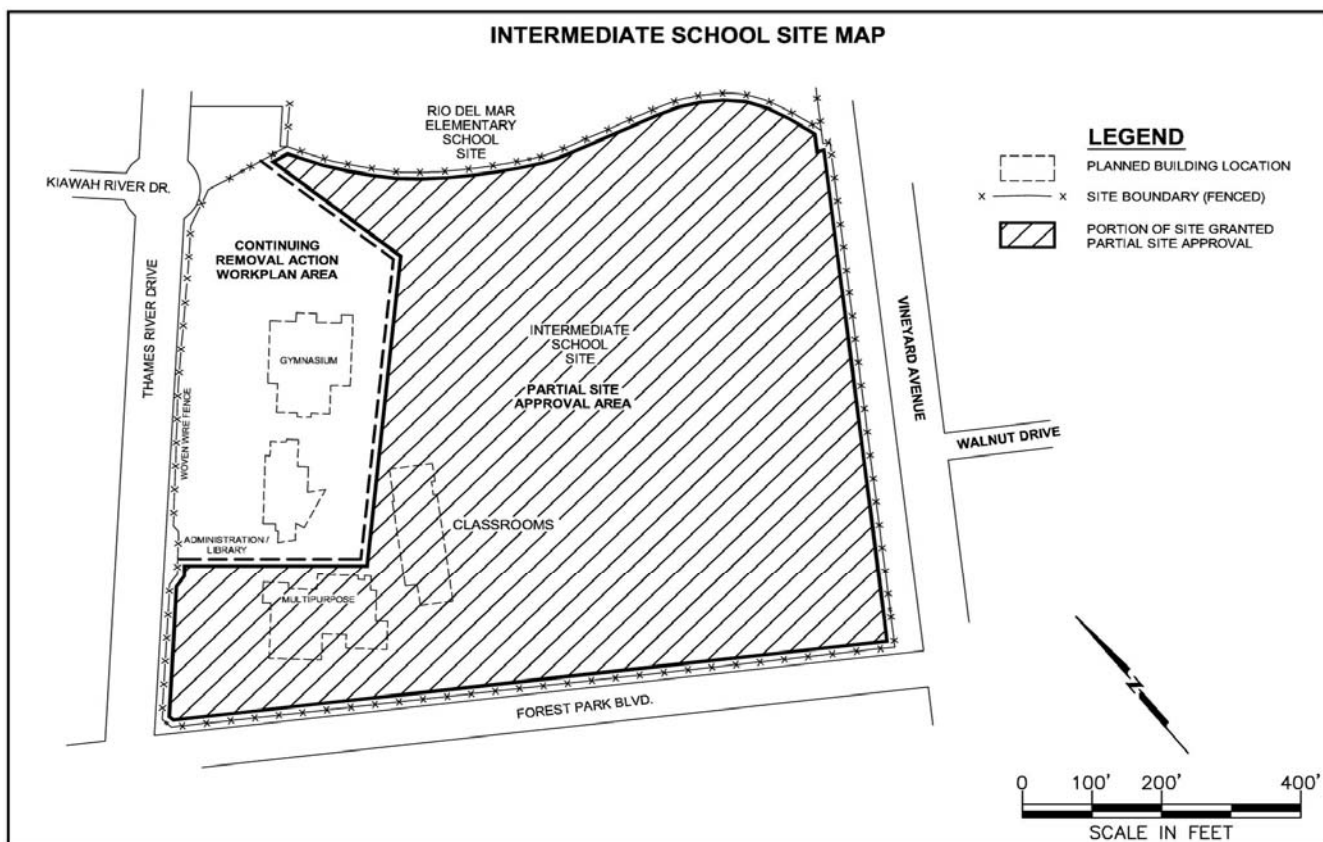
Prior to making a final decision on the Proposed Riverpark-Legacy Development Intermediate School Site Draft RAW, DTSC will receive comments during the public comment period, being held **May 12, 2006 to June 13, 2006**.

*Comments may be submitted in writing to:*

*Ms. Laura Zaremba, Project Manager  
Department of Toxic Substances Control  
1011 N. Grandview Avenue  
Glendale, California 91201.  
Email: [Lzaremba@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:Lzaremba@dtsc.ca.gov)*

Comments must be postmarked by **June 13, 2006**.

After the public comment period, DTSC will evaluate all of the submitted comments. If the Draft RAW is approved, the mitigation system will be installed. A Removal Action Completion Report will be prepared and submitted to DTSC for review and approval upon completion of the construction activities.



### **Meeting Accessibility**

For accessibility and to request reasonable accommodation, call Jeanne Matsumoto at (714) 484-5338 at least one week before the meeting.

### **Information Repositories**

The Draft RAW and other project documents are available for review at:

Rio School District Office  
3300 Cortez Street  
Oxnard, CA 93036  
(805) 485-3111

City of Oxnard Public Library  
251 S. A Street  
Oxnard, CA 93030  
(805) 385-7532 (Reference)  
(805) 385-7500 (Main)

Department of Toxic Substances Control  
Regional Records Office  
1011 N. Grandview Avenue  
Glendale, CA 91201  
Contact: Jone Barrio  
(818) 551-2952

**Department of Toxic Substances Control**  
**Jeanne Matsumoto**  
5796 Corporate Avenue  
Cypress, CA 90630

### **INSIDE:**

**Important Information on a proposed  
Oxnard School**

### **CONTENTE:**

**Información importante sobre la  
propuesta escuela**

### **For More Information**

If you have questions about the site please contact:

Jeanne Matsumoto  
DTSC Public Participation Specialist  
*1011 N. Grandview Avenue  
Glendale, CA 91201*  
(714) 484-5338  
Toll free: 1-866-495-5651  
Email: [Jmatsumo@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:Jmatsumo@dtsc.ca.gov)

Laura Zaremba  
DTSC Project Manager  
*1011 N. Grandview Avenue  
Glendale, CA 91201*  
(818) 551-2183  
Email: [Lzaremba@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:Lzaremba@dtsc.ca.gov)

### ***For media inquiries, please call:***

Jeanne Garcia  
DTSC Public Information Officer  
(818) 551-2176  
Email: [JGarcia@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:JGarcia@dtsc.ca.gov)

# COMMENT FORM

If you have any comments concerning the **Draft Removal Action Workplan** for the Riverpark-Legacy Intermediate School Site please fill out the information below and mail to DTSC in the enclosed envelope by **June 13, 2006**. Please include your name and address if you wish to receive a copy of the written Response to Comments when the Final Removal Action Workplan is issued.

You may use this sheet to:

- **send us your comments**
- **be added to or taken off the mailing list**

☐ Please take me off the mailing list

Please add me to the mailing list

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: (If you need more space, please feel free to use another sheet of paper)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

*Our mailings are used only for keeping you informed of our activities. We do not routinely release our mailing lists to outside parties. However, they are public records and, if requested, may be subject to release.*